H A R A M B E E

FLAME

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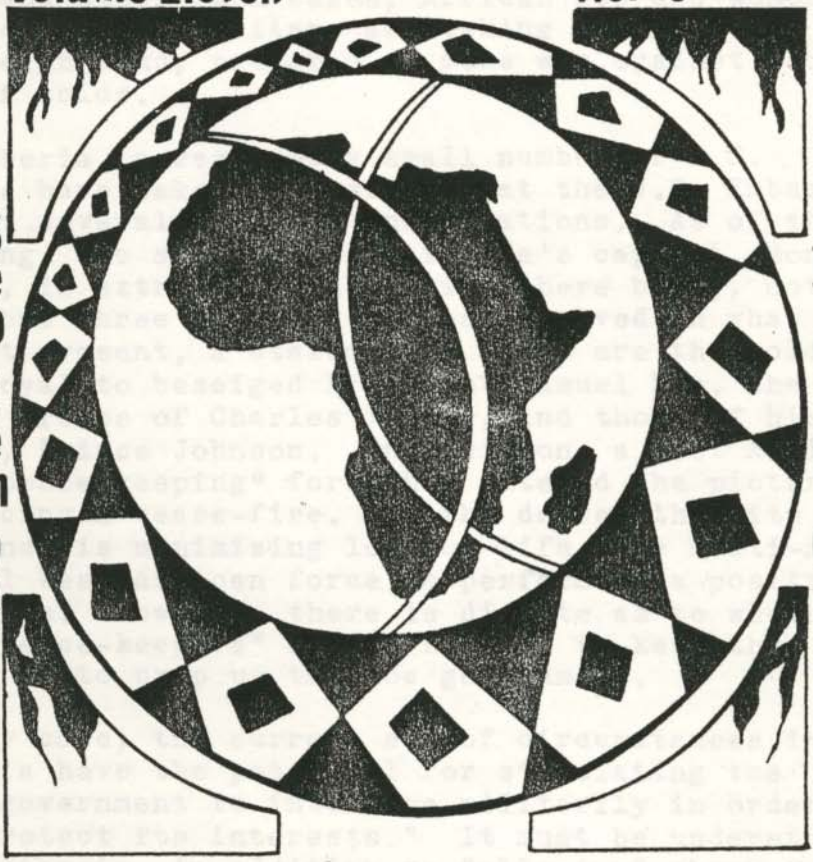

September 1990

In This Issue:

EDITORIAL: African G.I.s: Pawns In Uncle Sam's Games; FROM OTHER SOURCES: African Officials Target Of Feds, U.S. Involvement In Liberia, Mass Graves In Panama, Kenyan AIDS Cure; POETRY: Doodling; COMMUNITY NEWS: Mad Dads Questioned; Etc.

FLAME

AFRICAN G.I.s: PAWNS IN UNCLE SAM's GAMES

As we view footage on the news of U.S. military troops moving about on the sands of Saudi Arabia or the "weekend warriors" of the National Guard boarding planes for that destination, one of the things we notice is the substantial number of dark faces. As in the cases of Panama, Grenada, Viet Nam, and other such cases, African men and women in Uncle Sam's military are taking up positions in a foreign land, prepared to make war against people of color.

In Liberia, a reportedly small number of U.S. troops have taken up positions at the U.S. Embassy and at several military installations. As of this writing, the situation in Liberia's capital, Monrovia, is extremely tense, with there being, not two, but three opposing forces involved in what is, at present, a stalemate. There are the soldiers loyal to beseiged President Samuel Doe, the rebel troops of Charles Taylor, and those of his rival, Prince Johnson. In addition, a West African "peace-keeping" force has entered the picture, enforcing a cease-fire. To the degree that its presence is minimizing loss of life, the multi-national West African force is performing a positive function. However, there is dispute as to whether the "peace-keepers" are in Liberia to keep the peace or to prop up the Doe government.

In any case, the current set of circumstances in Liberia have the potential for stimulating the U.S. government to intervene militarily in order to "protect its interests." It must be understood that Liberia, in addition to "allowing" the U.S. to operate military bases there, has other agreements with the U.S. which enable it to make use of Liberia as a taking off point for air assaults (in particular) against what the U.S. might deem an "enemy" in the region. In exchange for this relationship, Liberia receives economic "aid" from the U.S.

With the diminishing of the cold war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. economic, political, and military alignments in the world are shifting. And while lessening of tensions between the so-called "super-powers" may have served to decrease the chances of all-out nuclear war, it has also served to pave the way for increased boldness on the part of the U.S. as to its flexing of military muscle. It can flex that muscle without much fear of ruffling the feathers of a Soviet Union which appears not to be any longer a bitter rival and which has enough internal problems to occupy its time and energies fully.

At the same time, there are signs that the U.S. may be about to enter an economic recession. Should this recession come to pass, it will mean that unemployment among African people in this country, which is already more than twice that among Caucasians, will increase. This will, of course, mean that more African people, more young men in particular, will be joining the armed forces as a way of dealing with joblessness. Recession or no recession, the fact is that many thousands of African men and women are already in the ranks of the military and the paramilitary/National Guard. General Colin Powell, an African, is near the top of the official military leadership and is given "credit" for the recent U.S. invasion of Panama, an operation in which upwards of 2,500 Panamanians, most of them Africans, were killed.

If the U.S. gets involved in a shooting war in Saudi Arabia, Africans in Uncle Sam's military will both kill and be killed by people of color. If the U.S. intervenes militarily in Liberia, Africans in Uncle Sam's armed services will both kill and be killed by other Africans. Will this not be "black"-on-"black" crime? But how much of this country's "black" press will decry it? How many of this country's African politicians will speak out against the crime of subjugated African people in this country functioning as hit men for an America which gives us neither justice nor respect?

The "black" press and African politicians in this country have in common a long tradition of either being silent about U.S. military interventions in foreign lands or supporting such actions. In addition, the "black" press in particular gives acclaim and honor to our people who enter the U.S. armed services and to those especially who achieve high rank or/and receive special recognition from military brass or the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, himself. Moreover, the "black" press(through recruitment ads and regular features) and "black" colleges promote the marching of African people into the ranks of the military. Many African parents in this country encourage their sons to enter the services, believing that the experience will give their male offspring discipline, maturity, and make men out of them.

But the U.S. armed services, like other American institutions, have as a primary objective the molding of its recruits into mindless pseudo-adults who are capable of little more than carrying out the orders that are given to them, whether those orders involve something as basic as cleaning a latrine or pulling the trigger on an M-16 or as complicated as developing some kind of multi-loop program for an aircraft's on-board computer. When it comes to the matter of the efficacy, appropriateness, or morality of American foreign or domestic policy - as it relates to the question of U.S. employment of military force - G.I.s typically have no opinion of their own. They are well-trained to let Uncle Sam do their "thinking" for them. And in those instances where G.I.s have the mental strength to have their own opinions, they seldom have the moral strength to act on them.

But it would be unfair to single out African people in the armed services. Afterall, the mindless adherence to orders from above, which characterizes this group, also characterizes factory workers, school teachers, mid-level corporate managers, police, and practically every other group of employees in this country--African, Caucasian, or otherwise.

What separates Africans in the U.S. military from Africans in most other fields are the comparatively high and intense degree of indoctrination which G.I.s receive and the fact that the orders they carry out can be fatal.

Most of the African leadership/spokespersonship in this country apparently don't view this business of armed Africans carrying out the orders of Uncle Sam as a problem. We hear a great deal from them about "black"-on-"black" crime when it's related to gang or other youth violence in African communities in America's cities but hear little or nothing from them about the "black"-on-"black" crime when it is perpetrated by Africans in America's military services against Africans or other people of color abroad.

And while the "black" press is busy giving accolades to Africans who acheive rank and medals in Uncle Sam's military, it seems to have no accolades to give when African G.I.s show moral strength in refusing to turn their weapons against other Africans or other people of color in foreign lands. One reason for this is the fact that these African publishers have achieved relatively high economic status and identify with a master who, in their minds, has shown them favor by allowing them to have some of what he has. Another reason is that their newspapers and magazines are commonly dependent on Caucasian advertisers, of which Uncle Sam is prominent. There are other reasons. But basically they boil down to what Malcolm X had to say about the "house negroes"--that when the master's house is burning, they rush to put out the fire even fater than the master would. Why? Because they love their master.

What our situation requires is that we spend our love on ourselves and each other because it is our own house - ramshackle as it might appear to be - that is burning.

. -Editor

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization (parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. We are not looking for poems which sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

AFRICAN OFFICIALS TARGET OF U.S. GOV. CONSPIRACY?

"(there is) a growing sense among African-Americans that the federal government is becoming more overtly antagonistic to their growing influence. In barbershops and laundramats, in supermarkets, taverns and wherever black people gather, the conversation increasingly turns to discussions of 'the conspiracy'. And the discussion is not limited to community enclaves...

"The well-publicized case of Mayor Barry is in part fueling much of this renewed concern. Barry's videotaped crack-smoking bust was extraordinarily embarrassing to many African-Americans who, because of this country's history of racist exclusion, tend to regard black elected officials as important symbols of racial affirmation rather than mere politicians. The history of affirmative black men in the U.S. has too often been one of lynching or lesser forms of debasement...

"But the concern over selective prosecutions of black officials is more than just symbolic...

"Faye Williams, staff counsel to Rep. Mervyn Dymally(D-CA) and a former congressional candidate from Louisiana, is convinced that the harassment of black officials im more a plan than just a pattern. 'In 1987, Rep. Dymally commissioned a study to consider the question of harassment of black public officials', Williams explained. 'That study was itself an update of one done in 1977 that had concluded that there was indeed a pattern of harassment of black public officials. The updated study', adds Williams, 'which was entitled *Harassment of Black Elected Officials, Ten Years Later*, was even more chilling in its disclosures of incidents of harassment'.

..."'It's touching appointed as well as elected officials, business leaders, civil rights leaders

and community leaders', she says. 'I'd have to say it's reaching epidemic proportions, and it's clearly about taking away the black community's power--what little we've gained'...

"Williams herself is particularly sensitive to the issue of harassment, as she was victimized by one of the most bizarre incidents recorded in the 1987 study. Her 1986 primary victory over four white opponents was virtually ignored by both the local and national media. But on the eve of the general election, her campaign helicopter was forced to land at an Air Force base where those aboard were greeted by armed officers. The following day, the local media headlined the story, alleging abusive language and misconduct by the candidate and her staff. No information was ever presented explaining the incident and Williams lost the election by less than 1 percent of the vote. 'Until this day, I've received no explanation for the forced landing', she notes. 'And the Air Force has conveniently lost all information regarding the radio messages ordering them to force us down'..."

-from "Federal Racism Rides On Backs of Black Officials," which appears on page 9 of the Aug. 15 -26 IN THESE TIMES(Chicago, ILL)

U.S INVOLVEMENT IN LIBERIAN STRUGGLE EXPLORED

"...the U.S. Government, over the past several weeks has prevented the forces of Charles Taylor from finishing the job it started of liberating the people of Liberia from the clutches of a madman, Samuel Doe, who was elevated to the presidency by a CIA assisted coup, and supported by the U.S with arms and money and 'advisers' for his ten year reign.

"Charles Taylor, an American educated Liberian, is head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia with at least six thousand troops under his command who are committed to deposing Dictator Doe. Taylor's forces have...slowed their pace to prevent what they

believed would be wholesale slaughter of civilians and unwarranted loss of life on military personnel. The U.S. representatives in Liberia and Washington, D.C. assured Mr. Taylor as well as Tom Woewiyu, National Patriotic Front Chairperson, that they would 'take care of Doe' and assured that he would be removed from office by them through negotiation and that they would assure him safe passage out of Liberia as well as sanctuary in an unnamed country.

"Encouraged by an absence of U.S. resolve in the removal of his forces, Mr. Doe, somehow, miraculously and probably with the help of the U.S., was able to continue to arm his forces, those of his own Kraan tribe - still loyal to him and numbering some 500 in and around his headquarters...

"With the airlift of 74 Americans from the U.S. Embassy Compound in Liberia that was never in any danger at all, the U.S. has now manufactured an excuse for U.S. intervention. The U.S. has set up a puppet in the guise of a rogue called Prince Johnson who had been a member of Charles Taylor's forces who went berserk and killed ten soldiers in the Taylor entourage, including a general. Insisting that this act of carnage was an act of patriotism, Prince Johnson headed for the bush and stayed there until he was rescued by American interests, armed and uniformed, and routed by the American Government toward the Doe Mansion with his reported 300 member militia. Coming in from behind the American compound, Johnson was set upon the road to the Doe mansion and was described by the American press as well as American officials there as an entity that could possibly reach Doe before Charles Taylor's forces - thus setting up Prince Johnson as one of equal stature to the man whose Liberian loyalists have been fighting for that country's liberation for the last six months.

..."it is alleged that Prince Johnson said that he would capture foreign nationals(including Americans) and hold them hostage. How Americans in

Liberia were able to announce this so quickly is still a mystery, for it was only a few hours from the announcement that Prince Johnson's forces were able to enter Monrovia and do just that. Strange? With the Doe forces still viable? They just let Prince Johnson walk in? Not at all; the 12 hostages Johnson took from the Hotel Africa were set up for him, thus establishing a need for the U.S. to back a force of United Nations inspired troops from countries of West Africa who will now go in as a peace-keeping force in order to prevent Taylor from taking power...all this, at the behest of the U.S. ..."

-from "Liberia: The Moment Of Truth," which appears on page 31 of the Aug. 11 N.Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS

MORE MASS GRAVES UNEARTHED IN PANAMA

"Eight months after the U.S. invasion of Panama the Panamanian death toll is still unknown. The figures continue to swell as mass graves are discovered in the country. The latest such site was uncovered in July at Mt. Hope Cemetary in Colon...

"In the most recent discovery, on July 28, Olga Mejia, president of the Panamanian National Human Rights Committee, was at the cemetary when that grave was opened...Mejia said, 'the bodies were almost totally decomposed...these human beings were thrown out like garbage, like trash, worse than animals'...

"This burial ground is but one of the reported 14 common graves that have now been identified by several human rights groups in Panama.

"The first such site, at the Peace Garden, was exhumed on April 28 and May 5, yielding a terrible harvest of dismembered bodies, broken bones and crushed skulls. All were buried by the U.S. Army during the December invasion, according to eye-witnesses...

"In early July, I visited the mass grave on the outskirts of Colon with Isabel Corro, president of the Association of Families and Friends of Those who Fell on December 20. Corro has led the movement for exhuming the common grave sites and has compiled a list of over 2,000 known dead. Based on the testimonies taken from families of the victims, she believes that at least 4,000 Panamanians were killed in the U.S. invasion..."

-from "Panama's Horrifying Secrets Unearthed," which appears on page 17 of the Aug. 15 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y., N.Y.)

POSSIBLE AIDS CURE FROM KENYA

(Editor's note: This is at least the second time over the past few months that we have printed information concerning this AIDS-treatment development. Why hasn't this been considered big news by the Establishment press?)

..."'Oral Alpha-Interferon' was developed at the Kenya Medical Research Institute, in Nairobi, Kenya, under the leadership and direction of Dr. Davy Koech...

"Dr. Davy Koech presented the findings of the Kenya Medical Research Institute to the world in Okayama, Japan, in April, 1990. He reported that, 'In a study of 101 patients, 99 were free of all symptoms, including appetite loss, fatigue, fever, diarrhea, and swollen lymph nodes within eight weeks!' Additionally, 'there were no side effects!'...

"...there may very well be another reason(in addition to the fact that this medical discovery was not made by a Caucasian-run or financed research lab) for the Western Press burying their heads in the sands of deliberate doubt and disbelief. American pharmaceutical companies, the American Medical Association by extension, have

(Cont. on page 14)

POETRY/STORY/GRAPHICS

DOODLING

always in july
summer camp
merely a block away
no tents cabins lakes canoes
no swimming pool not even a plastic
hole no archery no forest or nature trail
no t-shirted knock-kneed ofay
counselors with cuffs on their cut-offs
and round spectacles falling from their eyes
no words of admonitions pleas
("please, be good!") incentives
of any kind no colored ribbons gold trophies
white diplomas for attendance
the city playground had very little disguise
there was a table made of wood with
the salted streaks of forgotten snows weathering
a basketball court of concrete with
nets made of chain links so no one would call
city sanitation asking a favor too high out
of their work mode
there was a swing a slide a sandbox
all painted green and silver
to entice a gathering of hope
but no shed if it started raining no umbrella if
the sun were too hot no lavatory to run to
no tree if one could not
ofttimes the police would come with
sirens on because we laughed screamed too loud
here there was never a campfire as smoke
increased the smog
at five we had to go home 'cause junkies
roamed needing a fix
this was vacation from we children those
told we ought to be glad
those like our parents never had it so good
making potholders wallets beaded necklaces
papier-mache statues

(Concluded on page 12)

arts and crafts were surely our truths
at noon it was two graham crackers one pint of
milk while we pretended to be full
we=could play kickball or softball providing
we did not run out into the streets which were
part of the foul lines as space
was crowded too
a homerun would be in the neighbor's yard
but if they were on their porch
the game was over and fun a solemn song
the politicians were thoughtful on this
giving the inner city a whiff of life
it saved they said the water hydrant
the street corner
and kept some of us from being dead
in this respect just like the prison
where we could live without being
a pest... our choices were of their munificence
our future the straitened test.

-Wili Otey

Wili Otey is a frequent contributor of poetry to the FLAME. He is on death row at the Nebraska State Pen and has been fighting for his life for many years. He has also had two books of his poetry published.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

On the August 5th and 12th editions of "Kaleidoscope"(KETV, Omaha), host, Ben Gray, conducted group interviews with present and former gang (Bloods, Crips, etc.) members concerning issues of gang violence, violence prevention, why African youths join gangs, and other related matters. During both programs, comments were made by guests that were critical of MAD DADS. This group has gotten both local and national attention for its efforts in youth intervention and claims a membership of around 200 mostly African men, as well as MAD MOMS and MAD KIDS affiliates.

The criticisms raised were that MAD DADS cares more about garnering publicity than actually solving problems, that it spends more money on bomber jackets and other MAD DADS paraphernalia than on programs for African youth, that its claims about being in touch with hard-core gang members are false, and that MAD DADS members are not around at locations of violence or other crises. Carl Washington, head of C.W. Boxing Club and a person who has been involved in several efforts to develop and maintain positive programs for African youth in Omaha, appeared on these two editions of "Kaleidoscope" also and expressed the view that MAD DADS is trying to be a positive force.

On the August 19th edition of "Kaleidoscope," Ben announced that he had, earlier in the week, spoken with the MAD DADS leadership and asked him/them if a representative(s) of the organization would appear on his program and respond to the criticisms that had been made in its regard. He stated that MAD DADS had declined to appear, despite the fact that representatives had appeared on "Kaleidoscope" on a number of prior occasions. Interestingly, while MAD DADS would not make a showing on Ben's program, its heads, John Foster and Eddie Staton, did consent to being interviewed by a Caucasian reporter for KETV, Sherry Griffin. Ben aired a portion of that interview. In this inter-

(Cont. on page 16)

invested millions, perhaps billions, of dollars in the drug 'AZT' and other would-be cures and treatment of AIDS. The discovery of 'Oral Alpha-Interferon' is incompatible with patients who have used the American manufactured, 'AZT'...

"Further, 'Oral Alpha-Interferon' is so cheap that almost any person in the world with AIDS will be able to finance his/her treatment...The very low dose of alpha-interferon(two units per kilogram of body weight) is delivered in a wafer which is dissolved in the mouth once daily.

"The World Health Organization recently agreed to fund further research on 'Kemron'. This is, indeed, a critical development. The World Health Organization...has already concluded that the clinical trials are 'very successful...'

"An African-American group, headed by WLIB's Gary Byrd, Dr. Barbara Justice, Minister Clemson Brown of Trans Atlantic Productions, recently returned from a fact finding Mission in Kenya...At a press conference, held Monday, Aug. 13, at the Apollo Theatre, these worthy 'fact finders' presented their discoveries...

"There are four other African countries that are undergoing 'clinical trials' with Kemron: Cameroon, Congo, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. If one has AIDS here in America, he/she must travel to Kenya for treatment. Kemron is not available in the United States..."

-from "Out Of Africa: AIDS Cure Is Found," which appears on pages 13 and 37 of the Aug. 18 NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS

BACK IN TIME

(2) to elaborate and bring into effect a special program designed to perpetuate divisions in the black movement; to neutralize the most active groups of leftist radical orientation and to diminish their influence among blacks, to stimulate dissension and hostility between organizations representing different social strata of the black community, to encourage divisions in black circles;

(3) to preserve the present climate which inhibits the emergence from within the black leadership of a personality capable of exerting nationwide appeal;

(4)to work out and realize preventive operations in order to impede durable ties between U.S. black organizations and radical groups in African states;

(5) to support actions designed to sharpen social stratification in the black community, which would lead to the widening and perpetuation of the gap between the successful educated blacks and the poor, giving rise to growing antagonism between different black groups and weakening of the movement as a whole

(6) to facilitate the greatest possible expansion of black business by granting government contracts and loans on favorable terms to black businessmen;

(7) to take every possible measure through the AFL-CIO leaders to counteract the increasing influence of black labor organizations which function in all major unions, in particular the national Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and its leadership including the creation of real preconditions for adverse and hostile reaction...

(The above are excerpts from National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Africa Study in response to Presidential Security Review Memorandum I NSC-46, March 17, 1978,: BLACK AFRICA AND THE U.S. BLACK MOVEMENT. The above are listed in the "Range of Policy Options." The report was submitted by Zbigniew Brezenski to President Jimmy Carter.) Recommendations on inside back cover.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Black Touring Circuit, Inc. was founded in June, 1974...Our program has a two-fold purpose: to make available existing black theatre productions to a larger audience than is now possible for the individual, non-profit theatre organization; to develop a viable mechanism for the economic development of the participating theatres by sharing the net proceeds. For information on productions, prices, etc., contact: Nat'l. Blk. Touring Circuit
417 Convent Ave.
N.Y., N.Y. 10031
(212)598-0400 or 283-0974

The Omaha-based theatrical group, AfriKANS will be performing "3 X Love," at the September 15 Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization symposium at the State Prison in Lincoln, Nebraska. The symposium will run from 5:30-8:00 p.m.

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view, Foster and Staton responded to recently raised questions about their expenditures of money from donations, grants, etc.

Following the airing of a portion of the Griffin interview and giving some background information on the birth and activities of MAD DADS, Ben delivered a commentary in which he took the organization to task for its apparent failure to understand that, as an organization "feeding at the public trough," it is obligated to be accountable to the community, both in regards to the funds it obtains and the things for which it spends those funds. He called upon MAD DADS to not make claims about the work it is doing in the community that cannot be supported.

The commentary, while polite, was hard-edged and has stirred much discussion in the African community about whether MAD DADS is more hype than substance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In weighing the range of U.S. interests in black Africa, basic recommendations, arranged without intent to imply priority, are: (1) Specific steps should be taken with the help of appropriate government agencies to inhibit coordinated activity of the black nationalist movement in Africa and the black movement in the United States
(2) Special clandestine operations should be launched by the CIA to generate mistrust and hostility in American and world opinion against type of joint activity of the two forces (sic), and to cause division among black African radical nationalist groups and their leaders.
(3) U.S. Embassies to black African countries specially interested in southern Africa must be highly circumspect in view of the activity of certain political circles and influential individuals opposing the objectives and methods of U.S. policy toward South Africa...
(4) The FBI should mount surveillance operations against black African representatives and collect information on those, especially at the UN, who oppose U.S. policy toward South Africa. The information should include facts on their links with the leaders of the black movement in the United States, thus making possible at least partial neutralization of the adverse effects of their activity...
(8) to support the nomination at federal and local levels of loyal black public figures to elective offices, to government agencies and the courts. This would promote the achievement of a two-fold purpose: first it would be easier to control the activity of loyal black representatives within existing institutions; second, the idea of an independent black political party now under discussion within black leadership circles would soon lose all support.

Source: IHRAAM(International Human Rights Association of American Minorities) Newsletter; Vol. 3, No. 3.